

News Release
U.S. Department of Justice
United States Attorney
District of Rhode Island



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**New Bedford man is charged with
arranging fraudulent marriages in RI**

Carlos Alberto Da Veiga, of New Bedford, has been charged with illegally arranging fraudulent marriages for undocumented aliens seeking permanent resident cards, which are also known as Green Cards. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents arrested Da Veiga Monday after a five-month investigation.

United States Attorney Robert Clark Corrente announced a federal criminal complaint, which his office filed on October 25. Da Veiga appeared today before Magistrate Judge David L. Martin, who ordered him detained.

According to an affidavit supporting the complaint, ICE agents began an investigation in June after receiving telephone calls from employees in various Rhode Island towns about marriage license applicants who behaved suspiciously. The callers said that some applicants could not communicate with each other through language barriers and that another person accompanied some couples to the town offices when they applied for marriage licenses.

An ICE agent observed Da Veiga accompany different couples in June and July to Cumberland town hall to apply for marriage licenses. In July, an ICE agent seized from Da Veiga's car a ledger that contained biographical information for various U.S. citizens and aliens, information that, according to the affidavit, is typically needed for both marriage license applications and immigration applications.

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ICE agents developed evidence that, between May 2005 and this month, Da Veiga facilitated at least 15 fraudulent marriages between U.S. citizens and aliens seeking legal immigration status. According to the affidavit, Da Veiga charged an alien between \$3,000 and \$9,000 to arrange a marriage and paid a U.S. citizen \$1,500 for participating in it. Additionally, the alien had to pay the U.S. citizen \$200 per month while the alien's immigration application was pending.

According to the affidavit, Da Veiga brought couples to Rhode Island to get married because there is no waiting period for obtaining a marriage license and no blood tests required of couples getting married.

The complaint charges Da Veiga with conspiracy to enter into marriages for the purpose of evading immigration laws. Because the charge is a felony, it is subject to review by a federal grand jury. A complaint is merely an allegation and a defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Lee H. Vilker is prosecuting the case.

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